

The Spirit of Democracy.

"PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES, AND MEN THAT WILL CARRY THOSE PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES INTO EFFECT."

BY JAMES R. MORRIS.

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THE WIFE.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

"The treasures of the deep are not so precious as the concealed comforts of a man. Lock'd up in woman's love, I scent the air of blessing, when I come but near the house. What a delicious breath marriage sends forth!—The violet's not sweeter."—MIDDLETON.

I have often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character, that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching, than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness and dependence, and alive to every trivial roughness, while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and supporter of her husband under misfortunes, and abiding, with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity.

As the vine, which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy giant is ruffled by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs; so is it beautifully ordered by Providence, that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity; winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and lending up the broken heart.

I was once congratulating a friend, who had around him a blooming family, knit together in the strongest affection. "I can wish you no better lot," said he, "with enthusiasm, than to have a wife and children. If you are prosperous, there they are to share your prosperity; if otherwise, they are there to comfort you."—And, indeed, I have observed that a married man falling into misfortune, is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one; partly, because he is more stimulated to exertion by the necessities of the helpless and beloved beings who depend upon him for subsistence; but chiefly, because his spirits are soothed and relieved by domestic endearments, and his self-respect kept alive by finding, that though all abroad is darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is the monarch.—Whereas, a single man is apt to run to waste and self-neglect; to fancy himself lonely and abandoned, and his heart to fall to ruin, like some deserted mansion, for want of an inhabitant.

These observations call to mind a domestic story, of which I was a witness. My intimate friend, Leslie, had married a beautiful and accomplished girl, who had been brought up in the midst of fashionable life. She had, it is true, no fortune, but that of my friend was ample; and he delighted in the anticipation of indulging her in every elegant pursuit, and administering to those delicate tastes and fancies that spread a kind of witchery about the sex. "Her life," said he, "shall be like a fairy tale."

The very difference in their characters produced a harmonious combination; he was of a romantic, and somewhat serious cast; she was all life and gladness. I have often noticed the mute rapture with which he would gaze upon her in company, of which her sprightly powers made her the delight; and how, in the midst of applause her eye would still turn to him, as if there alone she sought favor and acceptance. When leaving on his arm, her slender form contrasted finely with his tall and manly person. The fond confiding air with which she looked up to him seemed to call forth a flush of triumphant pride and cherishing tenderness, as if he doted on his lovely burthen for its very helplessness. Never did a couple set forward on the flowery path of early and well-suited marriage with a fairer prospect of felicity.

It was the misfortune of my friend, however, to have embarked his property in large speculations; and he had not been married many months when, by a succession of sudden disasters it was swept from him, and he found himself reduced to almost penury. For a time he kept his situation to himself, and went about with a haggard countenance and a broken heart. His life was but a protracted agony; and what rendered it more insupportable was the necessity of keeping up a smile in the presence of his wife; for he could not bring himself to overwhelm her with the news. She saw, however, with the quick eyes of affection, that all was not well with him. She marked his altered looks and stifled sighs, and was not to be deceived by his sickly and rapid attempts at cheerfulness. She tasked all her sprightly powers; and tender blandishment to win him back to happiness; but she only drove the sorrow deeper into his soul. The more he saw cause to love her the more torturing was the thought that he was soon to make her wretched. A little while, thought he, and the smile will vanish from those lips—the lustre of those eyes will be quenched with sorrow—and the happy heart which now beats lightly in that bosom, will be weighed down, like mine, by the cares and miseries of the world.

At length he came to me one day, and related his whole situation in a tone of the deepest despair.—"When I had heard him through, I inquired, 'Does your wife know all this?' At the question he burst into an agony of tears. 'For God's sake!' cried he, 'if you have any pity on me, don't mention my wife; it is the thought of her that drives me almost to madness!'

"And why not?" said I; "she must know it sooner or later; you cannot keep it long from her, and the intelligence may break upon her in a more startling manner than if imparted by yourself; for the accents of those we love soften the harshest tidings. Besides, you are depriving yourself of the comforts of her sympathy; and not only that, but also endangering the only bond that can keep hearts together—an unreserved community of thought and feeling. She will soon perceive that something is secretly preying upon your mind; and true love will

not brook reserve: it feels undervalued and outraged, when even the sorrows of those it loves are concealed from it."

"Oh, but, my friend! to think what a blow I am to give to all her future prospects—how I am to strike her very soul to the earth, by telling her that her husband is a beggar!—that she is to forego all the elegancies of life—all the pleasures of society—to shrink with me into indigence and obscurity! To tell her that I have dragged her down from the sphere in which she might have continued to move in constant brightness—the light of every eye—the admiration of every heart!—How can she bear poverty? She has been brought up in all the refinements of opulence. How can she bear neglect? She has been the idol of society. Oh, it will break her heart—it will break her heart!"

"I saw his grief was eloquent, and I let it have its flow; for sorrow relieves itself by words. When his paroxysm had subsided, and he had relapsed into moody silence, I resumed the subject gently, and urged him to break his situation at once to his wife. He shook his head mournfully, but positively.

"But how are you to keep it from her? It is necessary she should know it, that you may take the steps necessary to the alteration of your circumstances. You must change your style of living—nay," observing a pang pass across his countenance, "don't let that afflict you. I am sure you have never placed your happiness in outward show—you have yet friends, warm friends, who will not think the worse of you for being less splendidly lodged;—and surely it does not require a palace to be happy with Mary." "I could be happy with her," cried he conclusively, "in a hovel!—I could go down with her into poverty and the dust!—I could—I could—God bless her!—God bless her!" cried he, bursting into a transport of grief and tenderness.

"And believe me, my friend," said I, stepping up and grasping him warmly by the hand, "believe me, she can be the same with you. Ay, more; it will be a source of pride and triumph to her—it will call forth all the latent energies and fervent sympathies of her nature; for she will rejoice to prove that she loves you for yourself. There is in every true woman's heart a spark of heavenly fire, which lies dormant in the broad daylight of prosperity; but which kindles up, and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity. No man knows what the wife of his bosom is—no man knows what a ministering angel she is—until he has gone with her through the fiery trials of this world."

There was something in the earnestness of my manner, and the figurative style of my language that caught the excited imagination of Leslie. I knew the audit I had to deal with; and following up the impression I had made, I finished by persuading him to go home and unburthen his sad heart to his wife.

I must confess, notwithstanding all I had said, I felt some little solicitude for the result. Who can calculate on the fortitude of one whose whole life has been a round of pleasure? Her gay spirits might revolt at the dark, downward path of low humility, suddenly pointed out before her, and might cling to the sunny regions in which they had hitherto revelled. Besides, ruin in fashionable life is accompanied by so many galling mortifications, to which, in other ranks, it is a stranger. In short, I could not meet Leslie, the next morning, without trepidation. He had made the disclosure.

"And how did she bear it?"

"Like an angel! It seemed rather to be a relief to her mind, for she threw her arms round my neck, and asked if this was all that had lately made me unhappy. But, poor girl," added he, "she cannot realize the change we must undergo. She has no idea of poverty but in the abstract; she has only read of it in poetry, where it is allied to love. She feels as yet no privation; she suffers no loss of accustomed conveniences nor elegances. When we come practically to experience its sordid cares, its petty wants, its petty humiliations—then will be the real trial."

"But," said I, "now that you have got over the severest task, that of breaking it to her the sooner you let her into the secret the better. The disclosure may be mortifying; but then it is a single misery, and soon over; whereas you otherwise suffer it in anticipation, every hour in the day. It is not poverty so much as pretence, that harasses a ruined man—the struggle between a proud mind and an empty purse—the keeping up a hollow show that must soon come to an end. Have the courage to appear poor, and you disarm poverty of its sharpest sting." On this point I found Leslie perfectly prepared. He had no false pride; and, as to his wife, she was only anxious to conform to their altered fortunes. Some days afterwards, he called upon me in the evening. He had disposed of his dwelling-house, and taken a small cottage in the country, a few miles from town. He had been busied all day in sending out furniture. The new establishment required few articles, and those of the simplest kind. All the splendid furniture of his late residence had been sold, excepting his wife's harp. That, he said, was too closely associated with the idea of herself; it belongs to the little story of their loves; for some of the sweetest moments of their courtship were those when he had leaned over that instrument, to listen to the melting tones of her voice. I could not but smile at this instance of romantic gallantry in a doating husband.

He was now going out to the cottage where his wife had been all day, superintending its arrangement. My feelings had become strongly interested in the progress of this family story, and as it was a fine evening, I offered to accompany him.

He was wearied with the fatigues of the day and as we walked out, fell into a fit of gloomy musing. "Poor Mary!" at length broke with a heavy sigh, from his lips.

"And what of her," asked I, "has anything happened to her?"

"What," said he, darting an impatient glance, "is nothing to be reduced to this paltry situation—to be caged in a miserable cottage—to be obliged to toil almost in the mental concerns of her wretched habitation?"

"Has she then repined at the change?"

"Repined!" she has been nothing but sweetness and good humor. Indeed, she seems a better spirit than I have ever known her; she has been to me all love, and tenderness, and comfort!"

"Admirable girl!" exclaimed I. "You call yourself poor, my friend; you never were so rich—you never knew the boundless treasures of excellence you possessed in that woman."

"Oh! but, my friend, if this first meeting at the cottage were over, I think I could then be comfortable. But this is her first day of real experience; she has been introduced into an humble dwelling—she has been employed all day in arranging her miserable equipments—she has for the first time known the fatigues of domestic employment—she has for the first time looked around her on a home destitute of every thing elegant—almost every thing convenient; and may now be sitting down, exhausted and restless, brooding over a prospect of future poverty."

There was a degree of probability in this picture that I could not gainsay, so we walked on in silence.

After turning from the main road, up a narrow lane, so thickly shaded by forest trees as to give it a complete air of seclusion, we came in sight of the cottage. It was humble enough in its appearance for the most pastoral poet; and yet it had a pleasing rural look. A wild vine had overrun one end with a profusion of foliage; a few trees threw their branches gracefully over it, and I observed several pots of flowers tastefully disposed about the door, and on the grass plot in front. A small wicket-gate opened upon a foot path that wound through some shrubbery to the door. Just as we approached, we heard the sound of music—Leslie grasped my arm, we paused and listened. It was Mary's voice, singing, in a style of the most touching simplicity, a little air of which her husband was peculiarly fond.

I felt Leslie's hand tremble on my arm. He stepped forward, to hear more distinctly. His step made a noise on the gravel walk. A bright beautiful face glanced out at the window, and vanished; a light footstep was heard—and Mary came tripping forth to meet us. She was in a pretty rural dress of white; a few wild flowers were twisted in her fine hair; a fresh bloom was on her cheek; her whole countenance beamed with smiles—I had never seen her look so lovely.

"My dear George," cried she, "I am so glad you are come, I have been watching and waiting for you; and running down the lane, and looking out for you. I've set out a table under a beautiful tree behind the cottage; and I've been gathering some of the most delicious strawberries, for I know you are fond of them—and we have such excellent cream—and every thing is so still and sweet here. Oh! said she, putting her arm within his, and looking up brightly in his face, "Oh, we shall be so happy!"

Poor Leslie was overcome. He caught her to his bosom—he folded his arms round her—he kissed her again—he could not speak, but the tears gushed into his eyes; and he has often assured me, that though the world has since gone prosperously with him, and his life has indeed been a happy one, yet never has he experienced a moment of more exquisite felicity.

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 22, 1844.

Read the first and second times—referred to the committee on foreign relations, and ordered to be printed in confidence for the use of the Senate.

A TREATY OF ANNEXATION. Concluded between the United States of America and the republic of Texas, at Washington, the 12th day of April, 1844.

The people of Texas having, at the time of adopting their constitution, expressed, by an almost unanimous vote, their desire to be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and being still desirous of the same with equal unanimity, in order to provide more effectually for their security and prosperity; and the United States, actuated solely by the desire to add to their own security and prosperity, and to meet the wishes of the government and people of Texas, have determined to accomplish by treaty objects so important to their mutual and permanent welfare.

For that purpose, the President of the United States has given full powers to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of State of the United States, and the President of the republic of Texas, has appointed, with like powers, Isaac Van Zandt, and J. Pinckney Henderson, citizens of the said republic; and the said plenipotentiaries, after exchanging their full powers, have agreed on and concluded the following articles:

ARTICLE I. The republic of Texas, acting in conformity with the wishes of the people and every department of its government, cedes to the United States all its territories, to be held by them in full property and sovereignty, and to be annexed to the said United States as one of their territories, subject to the same constitutional provisions with their other territories. This cession includes all public lots and squares, vacant lands, mines, minerals, salt lakes and springs, public edifices, fortifications, barracks, ports and harbors, navy and navy-yards, docks, magazines, arms, armaments and accoutrements, archives and public documents, public funds, debts, taxes, and dues unpaid at the time of the exchange of the ratification of this treaty.

ART. II. The citizens of Texas shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and admitted as soon as may be consistent with the principles of the federal constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights, privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States.

ART. III. All titles and claims to real estate, which are valid under the laws of Texas, shall be held to be so by the United States; and measures shall be adopted for the speedy adjudication of all unsettled claims to land, and patents shall be granted to those found to be valid.

ART. IV. The public lands hereby ceded shall be subject to the laws regulating the public lands

in the other territories of the United States, as far as they may be applicable; subject, however, to such alterations and changes as Congress may from time to time think proper to make. It is understood between the parties, that if, in consequence of the mode in which lands have been surveyed in Texas, or from previous grants or locations, the sixteenth section cannot be applied for the purpose of education, Congress shall make equal provision by grant of land elsewhere. And it is also further understood, that hereafter, the books, papers, and documents of the General Land Office of Texas shall be deposited and kept at such place in Texas as the Congress of the United States shall direct.

ART. V. The United States assume and agree to pay the public debt and liabilities of Texas, however created, for which the faith or credit of her government may be bound at the time of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty; which debts and liabilities are estimated not to exceed, in the whole, ten millions of dollars, to be ascertained and paid in the manner hereinafter stated.

The payment of the sum of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars shall be made, at the treasury of the United States, within ninety days after the exchange of the ratification of this treaty, as follows: Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to Frederick Dawson, of Baltimore, or his executors, on the delivery of that amount of ten per cent. bonds of Texas; one hundred thousand dollars, if so much be required, in the redemption of the exchequer bills which may be in circulation at the time of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty. For the payment of the remainder of the debts and liabilities of Texas, which, together with the amount already specified, shall not exceed ten millions of dollars, the public lands herein ceded, and the net revenue from the same, are hereby pledged.

ART. VI. In order to ascertain the full amount of the debts and liabilities herein assumed, and the legality and validity thereof, four commissioners shall be appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, who shall meet at Washington, Texas, within the period of six months after the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, and may continue in session not exceeding twelve months, until the Congress of the United States should prolong the time. They shall take an oath to the faithful discharge of their duties, and that they are not directly or indirectly interested in said claims at the time, and will not be during their continuance in office; and the said oath shall be recorded with their proceedings. In case of the death, sickness, or resignation of any of the commissioners, his or their place or places may be supplied by the appointment, as aforesaid, or by the President of the United States during the recess of the Senate. They, or a majority of them, shall be authorized, under such regulations as the Congress of the United States may prescribe, to hear, examine and decide all questions touching the legality and validity of said claims, and shall, when a claim is allowed, issue a certificate to the claimant, stating the amount, distinguishing principle from interest. The certificates so issued shall be numbered, and entry made of the number, the name of the person to whom issued, and the amount, in a book to be kept for that purpose. They shall transmit the records of their proceedings and the book in which the certificates are entered, with the vouchers and documents produced before them, relative to the claims allowed or rejected, to the treasury department of the United States, to be deposited therein; and the Secretary of that treasury shall, as soon as practicable after the receipt of the same, ascertain the aggregate amount of the debts and liabilities allowed; and if the same, when added to the amount to be paid to F. Dawson, and the sum which may be paid in the redemption of the exchequer bills, shall not exceed the estimated sum of ten millions of dollars, he shall on the presentation of a certificate of the commissioners, issue, at the option of the holder, a new certificate for the amount, distinguishing principle from interest, and payable to him or order out of the net proceeds of the public lands hereby ceded, or stock of the United States, for the amount allowed, including principal and interest, and bearing an interest of three per cent. per annum from the date thereof; which stock in addition to being made payable out of the net proceeds of the public lands hereby ceded, shall also be receivable in payment for the same. In case the amount of the debts and liabilities allowed, with the sums aforesaid to be paid to Frederick Dawson, and which may be paid in the redemption of the exchequer bills shall exceed the said sum of ten millions of dollars, the said secretary, before issuing a new certificate, or stock, as the case may be, shall make in each case such proportionable and ratable reduction on its amount as to reduce the aggregate to the said sum of ten millions of dollars, and he shall have power to make all needful rules and regulations necessary to carry into effect the powers hereby vested in him.

ART. VII. Until further provision shall be made, the laws of Texas, as now existing, shall remain in force; and all executive and judicial officers of Texas, except the President, Vice President and heads of departments, shall retain their offices, with all power and authority appertaining thereto, and the courts of justice shall remain in all respects as now established and recognized.

ART. VIII. Immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint a commissioner, who shall proceed to Texas and receive the transfer of the territory thereof, and all the archives and public property and other things herein conveyed, in the name of the United States. He shall exercise all executive authority in said territory necessary to the proper execution of the laws, until otherwise provided.

ART. IX. The present treaty shall be ratified by the contracting parties, and the ratification exchanged at the city of Washington, in six months from the date hereof, or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof, we, the undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the United States of America and

the republic of Texas, have signed, by virtue of our powers, the present treaty of annexation, and have hereunto affixed our seals, respectively.

Done at Washington, the twelfth day of April, eighteen hundred and forty-four.

J. C. CALHOUN. [SEAL]
ISAAC VAN ZANDT. [SEAL]
J. PINCKNEY HENDERSON. [SEAL]

SPEECH

OF MR. DUNCAN, OF OHIO.

In the house of representatives, March 6, 1844, on the bill introduced by him to regulate the election of electors for President and Vice President, and members of Congress throughout the United States.

Mr. DUNCAN spoke as follows:

There is no higher duty we owe to ourselves, to each other, and to our country, in whatever situation we may be placed, or whatever sphere in life we may fill, than to understand the nature of our government, and the civil situation by which our rights are to be maintained as citizens, and by which our civil duties towards each other are to be regulated. This duty is not more binding upon us in a civil than in a political sense. It is indispensable to a faithful discharge of our duties as private citizens that we should understand the duties of a citizen. Those duties involve a knowledge of the legal and political restraints which civil government throws around us and brings us under. These civil duties and obligations are common to us and binding upon all men in a state of organized society, whatever the form of government may be, but we, as American citizens, in addition to these duties, owe some of a higher character which may more properly be denominated political duties, which I contristinguished from civil duties for the purpose of illustration. Civil duties, and a knowledge of the obligations which civil duties impose, appertain to the subjects of a monarchy or an aristocracy. The same civil duties, in proportion to the requisitions of law, appertain to the citizens of a republican government; but owing to the fact that each individual here is not only a citizen, but also a member of the republic and part of the law-making power, he owes some higher duties than a mere citizen. Those higher duties I call political duties. Obedience is the duty of the humble subject of the monarchical government, while command is the prerogative of the monarch; but in a republican government, the duties of obedience and submission are united with the prerogative to command in the same person. Such is the nature of our government. With us, no man can be so low as to shake off the duties of legal and constitutional submission; no man can be so high as to exempt from them. No man can be so low (in crime excepted) as to excuse himself from a participation in the duties of governing. No man can be so high as to transcend exemption from the obligations and duties of the most humble citizen, or to exercise powers in the establishment of rules of civil conduct not common to each and every citizen, only as that power was delegated to him by the suffrage of those he represents, in whatever official position he may occupy. And this leads me to an expose of the character of our government. That I do, not only in conformity with a high duty which I owe as a citizen in common, but as a representative; I do it not only because we cannot too frequently refer to first principles, whether in private or official capacity; but because the bill under consideration, in its defence and advancement, requires such an expose, in order to illustrate the absolute necessity of this bill becoming a law.

Sir, our government is a government of the people. It was created by the people; and the people are the government, to every political purpose and intent. And in these consists the great and fundamental difference between a republican (or democratic) form of government and all others. I believe there are but three direct forms of government regarded as fundamental, viz: a monarchical, an aristocratical, and a republican form; all others are modifications or mixtures of those. All governments were republican in their origin; no people ever were so blind to their own interests, and so regardless of their individual privileges and natural rights as to surrender them into the hands of any one man or set of men to dispose of them at his or their pleasure or caprice. I make another assertion—that is, that man possesses all the requisites for self-government; and to deny those requisites is a slander on the human family, and a base imputation on the Almighty. I also assert that no government ever fell by the corruptions of the people. Why, then, (it has been and will be asked,) have all republics fallen? Why have all governments which depended upon the aggregate wisdom and stability of the people, failed? It is part of my purpose, in my support of the present bill, to answer these interrogatories. At present, I wish to define and illustrate the character of our government; and, for that purpose, to illustrate the difference to the end that ours may be better understood.

A monarchical government is that which concentrates all power, legislative, judicial, and ministerial, in the hands of a single individual. An aristocracy is that form of government which places the same powers, and the same amount of power, in the hands of a few individuals. Such governments are called absolute monarchies, or absolute aristocracies, as the case may be—absolute, because the mass of the people have no participation in making, adjudicating upon, or executing the laws by which they are governed. Their civil duties consist in submission and obedience; prerogative duties in commanding submissive obedience to the laws which they have no hand in making, and submission and obedience to the adjudication of laws, without any part in the adjudication and submission, and obedience to the execution of the laws, without any share in the execution, only as the subjects of execution. In such governments, the people are a kind of political automata, without political will or volition, which move merely as they are moved by the will of the laws which govern them, or the will of him or them who make the laws. Such a

people may bear, in their external form, the image of their Maker for a time, but have the soul of Balaam's ass, and in time will become asses both in soul and body. A monarchy and an aristocracy may both assume a representative character, by a delegation of the prerogatives or law making, law adjudication, and law execution, which is most generally the case in extensive monarchies and aristocracies; but representative change does not change the character of the government; it only operates to the case of the monarch, or for those holding power in an aristocracy, not to the relief or enfranchisement of the people. Those who receive the delegation of such prerogatives, are the representatives of the original power; and it is his will, power, and interest, they are bound to promote—not the interests of the people. And it is most generally the case, that representative monarchies and aristocracies are the most oppressive of all governments; they increase taxation, and oppress still more by means of collection, without, in any particular, elevating the character or condition of the subject. But I have neither time nor space to pursue the investigation in detail; it is sufficient to say they are, both in their nature and practical operation, calculated to oppress the subject, and are works, than no government. I would prefer anarchy; I would rather die in defence of my natural rights, than live a slave. A republican government, I repeat, is a government of the people. The people and the government, in a political sense, are the same. I have said, in all republics, all political prerogatives belong to the people: this is literally true. Though our government is a representative democracy, yet all power is in the hands of the people, and their representatives are but their agents, bound by their will, responsible to them, and removable at their will. It was impossible, at the commencement, that ours could be any thing but a representative democracy; our population was too great, and our territory was too wide spread to admit of a simple democracy.

The framers of our government were compelled to give us a representative democracy—that is, to authorize us to appoint agents to do that for us, which we, according to the fundamental principles of democracy, should have done ourselves. Our ancestors, in the formation of our government, provided the means by which we should appoint our agents. The power and the means by which we appoint our political agents or representatives, is called the elective franchise. To define all of our free institutions which make up our proud and glorious political fabric, is foreign to my present purpose, nor does the support of the present bill require such a range. There is one of our free institutions which I propose very briefly to discuss—I mean the elective franchise. That is one which, of all others, demands our attention, our consideration, and our especial guardianship. Of all our proud institutions, that is the proudest; of all our free institutions, that is the most valuable. It is the soul and the body of our republic; it is the basis of our political fabric; it is the foundation of all our free institutions. Destroy it, and our government loses its name, and all our free institutions are annihilated. They become, in an instant, a part of the dust of other republics; and, with them, must be numbered among the things that are not. The elective franchise is not only the arch of our own, and every other republic, and the main pillar of the temple of liberty, but it is their rule by which freedom is measured; for just in proportion to the exercise of the elective franchise, so are any people free and sovereign. Freedom and the elective franchise are synonymous terms and handmaids. The one has no abiding place without the other. They walk hand in hand together, they live together, they die together. The framers of our government were so conscious of the vast importance of the elective franchise, that they interwove it in the political institutions of our country in such a manner that it could not be destroyed without bringing ruin upon all others. Our ancestors had a right to expect that this franchise, which was purchased with the blood of thousands, and with the treasure of millions, would be appreciated as a rich legacy—would never be squandered. They had a right to suppose that those moral, political, and patriotic obligations and sacred covenants which descended upon their posterity, would forever be a secure guaranty against all innovations upon that sacred institution. They had a right to suppose that no son of theirs would be so prodigal and reckless as to squander that legacy which was to provide peace, happiness, freedom, and independence to millions, and for all time. They had a right to hope that no wretch would be found base enough to corrupt that franchise upon whose purity depended the duration of all the free institutions purchased with their blood and their treasure. But, not content with that hope and that confidence which they had a right to indulge—not content with the obligations of patriotism upon those who were to inherit the rich legacy of their toil, they superadded religion and morality. They interwove, in the official duties of all who were to have the safe keeping of the elective franchise, a solemn oath. They required the individual whose choice or the law was to select to guard the purity of the elective franchise, to appear at the throne of the Judge of the living and the dead, and in His presence and in His name to bind themselves to permit no unhallowed foot to tread upon that sacred franchise. Such is the value of the elective franchise, and such are the means provided to defend and preserve it in its purity. But, in order that this sacred institution shall remain pure, and shall the more completely maintain all our other free institutions, our constitutions and laws have wisely defined the manner in which it shall be used, the time when it shall be used, the place where it shall be used, by whom it shall be used, and the circumstances under which it shall be used. A violation of any of those provisions is a violation of the constitutions and of the laws regulating the use of the elective franchise, and a corruption and violation of the franchise itself, and he who is guilty of it, is guilty of treason the most dangerous and aggravated; and if the sworn officer whose duty it is to guard and defend that franchise, has wilfully